



Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department

2018 Youth Soccer Rules

Table of Contents

- I. League Information
- II. Playing Rules
- III. MCPRD Rules & Policies
- IV. Age Classification
- V. Age Specific Specifications
- VI. Protests
- VII. Code of Conduct
- VIII. Suspensions

Mecklenburg County Youth Sports Philosophy

To provide an environment for children to learn the fundamentals of sport while emphasizing the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, physical activity, healthy lifestyle, and fair play is our primary objective.

The three main desired outcomes from participating in our youth sports programs are;

- 1. Safety**
- 2. Fun**
- 3. Participation development based on;**
 - a. Everyone Plays**
 - b. Balanced Teams**
 - c. Positive Coaching**
 - d. Sportsmanship**

I. LEAGUE INFORMATION

- a. **GENERAL INFORMATION:** The program shall be known as “Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department’s Youth Fall Soccer League”.
- b. **REGISTRATION:** Registration will be held in July and will remain open for a minimum of four (4) weeks. Participants can register at;
 - i. Any MCPRD recreation facility
 - ii. Online at www.parkandrec.com by clicking on the “EParks” logo
 - iii. Specific questions can be directed to the Youth Sports Department at (980) 314-1116 or via email at YouthSports@mecknc.gov
- c. **LENGTH OF SEASON / SCHEDULE:** The sport season is typically eight games. Certain unforeseen situations may be cause for the postponement of games. Youth Sports will make best efforts to reschedule all postponed games, however there is no guarantee that all scheduled games will be played. All teams at or above the 9 year old age group may be eligible for postseason play/tournament.

II. PLAYING RULES

a. US Youth Soccer (USYS) Rules

All games will be governed by the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), the youth affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). For more information or to view the US Youth Soccer rules, please visit www.ussoccer.com

b. MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK & RECREATION YOUTH SPORTS MODIFICATIONS

MCPRD reserves the right to modify league play rules and policies to accommodate and/or enhance the overall user experience and/or quality of the program. These rules **MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO** by all staff, officials, coaches, teams, participants, parents, and spectators.

c. GENERAL RULES OF THE GAME

- i. **Starting and Stopping Play:** The “HOME” team will have first possession of the game. To begin play, the defensive players MUST remain outside of the center circle or 10 yards from the ball, within their half of the field. Offensive players will be permitted to be inside of the circle for the kick off. The referee will sound the whistle to indicate the start of the game. The kick-off is considered an indirect kick in which a legal goal can NOT be scored without contacting another player. On the initial kick, the ball must travel in any direction to begin play, and the kicker may not contact the ball legally again until after another player has touched the ball. Stoppages of play will occur in the following situations; fouls, infractions, and when the ball goes out of bounds on the side line or end line. Balls crossing completely over the end line will either result in a corner kick (offensive possession) or goal kick (defensive possession). Balls completely crossing the side line will result in a “pass in” at the 5/6 and 7/8 age classifications and a “throw in” at all age groups 9 years and up. Instructional divisions will alternate kicking off to begin quarters, and recreational divisions will alternate kicking off at the half.
- ii. **Changing Ends:** Teams will change ends of field at the half.

- iii. **Scoring:** A goal is scored when the ENTIRE ball has legally crossed the goal line, between the goal posts and under the cross bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by a hand or arm of a player on the attacking side. After a legal goal is scored, the game will restart with a kick off at center field by the team yielding the last goal.
- iv. **Goal Kicks:** Awarded when the ball COMPLETELY crosses the defensive end line after being touched by an offensive player, taken by the defensive team.
- v. **Corner Kicks:** Direct kicks, which are awarded when the ball COMPLETELY crosses the defensive end line after being last touched by a defending player, which are taken from within or on the corner arc by the offensive team.
- vi. **Direct Kicks:** Free kicks that may be legally struck directly into the goal and are not required to contact another player prior to being scored. Direct Kicks are only applicable at or above the 9-10 age classification. Direct kicks are awarded at the official's discretion when it is deemed that a player has committed an offense that is considered careless, reckless, or with excessive force. Examples of offenses for which a direct kick can be awarded include; kicks or attempts to kick an opponent, trips or attempts to trip an opponent, jump at or into an opponent, charging violently or in a dangerous manner, strikes or attempts to strike an opponent, intentionally holding or pushing an opponent, and handling the ball deliberately.

*Note: If any of the above offenses are whistled within the penalty area, a penalty kick will be awarded.

- vii. **Indirect Kicks:** Free kicks that MUST be touched by another player prior to a legal goal being scored. Examples of offenses that may call for an indirect kick include; intentional dangerous play, obstruction (shielding the ball from a player without established possession or position), interfering with the goalkeeper, delay of game tactics, two consecutive touches by the same player on a kick off, free kick or throw in, dissents by words or actions regarding an official on-field ruling.

*Note: Indirect kicks are used for all infractions at the 5-6 and 7-8 age classifications.

III. **MCPRD POLICIES & PROCEDEURES**

- a. **Scoring.** Score will NOT be kept at the 5-6 & 7-8 Instructional Divisions. Score will be kept at the 9-10 Recreational Division and older age classifications. Game officials will report scores to the site supervisor immediately following each game.
 - i. **Mercy Rule.** When a team at the 9-10 or older age classifications takes a five (5) goal lead it will be required to remove one player from the field of play. The team in the lead will be required to remove one additional player for each additional goal scored (Example. A 6-goal lead will reduce the number of players on field by two players, a 7-goal lead will reduce the number of players on field

by three players, and so on...). As the margin of lead is lessened, the number of participating players may return to the field in the same manner which they were removed.

- b. **Coaches.** Each team's Head Coach must be certified by NYSCA.
- c. **Bench / Sideline Personnel.** A maximum of three (3) bench personnel (coaches or team manager) per team will be permitted in the bench area. For the 9-10 age classification and higher, this may include a statistician. All other team personnel MUST remain inside the designated spectator area. Each approved volunteer will be issued an ID badge which MUST be visible to MCPRD game operations staff on game days.
- d. **Warm-up.** On field warm-up time will NOT be scheduled. Teams may utilize the field for warm-up time once the previous game has concluded and they have been directed by game operations staff to take the field. Games will begin PROMPTLY at their scheduled start time. MCPRD staff shall determine grace period before ruling forfeit.
- e. **Official Time Clock.** All officials shall check with staff to verify and synchronize time before any decisions are made with regards to forfeits, grace periods, etc. Once each game has begun, official timing shall be kept by the field official. Clock stoppages will occur only in the event of an injury or extenuating circumstances.
- f. **Overtime.** During the regular season, when recreational division games have a tied score at the end of regulation time, a five (5) minute overtime period will be played. A coin flip by the game official will determine which team will have the first possession. The overtime period will be played in its entirety, and the final score at the end of the overtime period will be recorded as such, including ties.
- g. **Game Scheduling & Make-Ups.** MCPRD reserves the right to postpone scheduled games due to inclement weather or unsafe field conditions at their discretion. However, Youth Sports will make best efforts to reschedule all postponed games when possible, even though that cannot be guaranteed.
- h. **Inclement Weather Hotline.** In the event of INCLEMENT WEATHER, information related to the status of scheduled games can be heard at 704-432-3834. Every effort will be made to update the hotline by 4pm of weekdays and 8am on weekends. Recreation Centers that host teams and games can also be contacted for additional information and updates.
- i. **ADA Compliance.** To comply with The American Disabilities Act, league rules may be further modified to include participants. An "ADA Exception Form" must be submitted to Karla Gray, Director Therapeutic Division and the Youth Sports Department Staff for approval and verification of any rule modifications.
- j. **Equipment.** Each team will provide a minimum of one appropriately sized official game ball per game. Rubber (molded) cleats, turf or athletic shoes are permitted. Hard plastic or metal cleats are prohibited. Each 9-10 team and above MUST provide a goalie jersey, which MUST significantly contrast in color from team uniforms. Each youth soccer participant is required to wear shin guards, under the socks, during game play. Participants are also STROGLY ENCOURAGED to wear an athletic supporter, cup, or groin pad during participation. Jewelry and hair accessories are prohibited and MUST be removed prior to participation.

- k. **Uniforms.** During competition, all teams are required to wear uniforms consisting of the same or similar colored jerseys or shirt. Jerseys or shirts should be printed with a number on the back that are at least six (6) inches in height, to identify individual players. Under shirts and pants may be worn due to seasonal weather extremes as needed. Temporary uniform modifications are prohibited.
- l. **Team PHOTO ID SHEET.** All 9-10 and older teams MUST submit an official Team Photo ID Sheet that is verified by the Facility Manager of the corresponding recreation center or the athletic director of outside or independent organizations admitted into the league, PRIOR TO PLAYING THE FIRST GAME OF THE SEASON. A headshot (photo), full name, and date of birth MUST be stated for each player on the ID sheet / roster. A copy of the official Team Photo ID Sheet MUST Be made available by the head coach or team manager 10 minutes prior to the start of each game and anytime at the request of Youth Sports staff.
- m. **Birth Certificates.** All players are required to provide a valid birth certificate or other approved legal document showing proof of age, which MUST be verified by CRC staff to establish eligibility.
- n. **Forfeits.** There are NO forfeits at the 6U and 8U instructional divisions. At the 10U recreation division, each team MUST be ready to play with the minimum required number of players (5) on site at their scheduled game time. In the event a team is unable to produce the minimum number of players to begin the game, the result is a forfeit with a reported score of 3-0 for the winning team.* In the event both teams are unable to produce the required minimum number of players to begin the game, both teams will receive a loss in the recorded standings with a recorded score of 3-3 for that game.* If any team forfeits three (3) games in a season, they will be subject to dismissal from the league, pending review by Youth Sports and/or the Focus Team Group. All CRCs and Head Coaches should make best effort to inform their local Facility Manager and/or Youth Sports with as much notice as possible when they know they cannot field a team. *NOTE: MCPRD site staff reserve the right to have final authority/decision making on all potential forfeit situations dependent upon extenuating circumstances which may have caused the forfeit.
- o. **Volunteer Coaches.** ALL MCPRD volunteer coaches MUST complete the following requirements prior to assuming their role;
 - i. Each volunteer MUST apply and receive approval as a youth sports coach through the online process
 - ii. Each coach MUST read, acknowledge, sign, and adhere to the MCPRD Coach's Code of Conduct
 - iii. Each Head Coach will be required to complete training and receive certification through The National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS). The online training can be scheduled by staff at the respective CRC. Although only the Head Coach is required, Youth Sports recommends all coaches receive training and certification.
 - iv. MCPRD strongly recommends that ALL coaches attend a preseason coaching meeting

- v. Each coach MUST thoroughly understand and adhere to playing rules, MCPRD Code of Ethics and Conduct and support the overall philosophy of the Youth Sports Department.
- p. **Player Eligibility.** Participants can play on only one (1) team within a MCPRD program. Any player listed on multiple rosters or participating on multiple teams will be found ineligible immediately. Any participants or teams found to be in violation of this rule are subject to forcible forfeit, suspension and/or further supplemental discipline.

All Teams, participants, parents, spectators, officials, staff, and coaches MUST abide by all MCPRD rules and policies, which govern participation in the league's and programs under its jurisdiction.

IV. AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

MCPRD Youth Sports will offer the following age groups for the 2018 Fall Soccer Season;

1. CO-ED Instructional Division 5-6 years of age
 2. CO-ED Instructional Division 7-8 years of age
 3. CO-ED Recreational Division 9-10 years of age
- a. **Cut Off Date.** Age classifications are determined by the participant's calculated age as of the first day of the month in which the season starts, September 1, 2018.
 - b. **Play Up Policy.** Participants registering for MCPRD programs are strongly recommended to play within their corresponding pre-determined age classification according to their chronological age as determined as of the "cut off" date. In the event a parent or guardian feels that their child would benefit greatly from participating at a higher age classification, the department may acknowledge and consider the request and will accommodate any approved request upon completion of the "Play Up Form". Players may "play up" by only one (1) year, to the next age classification, when applicable. A Play Up Release of Liability and Assumption Risk document will need to be signed by a legal guardian, filed at the corresponding CRC, with a copy submitted to Youth Sports.
 - c. **Must Play Rule.** Coaches MUST monitor and manage the playing time of ALL participants on their respective team. Maximum participation for ALL is encouraged. ALL divisions will abide by the "MUST PLAY RULE".
 - i. **Instructional players MUST play a minimum of 1 half or 2 quarters**
 - ii. **Recreational players MUST play a minimum of 1 half or 2 quarters**
 - d. **Tournament Play.** The 9-10 Recreational Division will have a County-Wide Playoff Tournament at the end of the regular season. Age classifications below 10U will not be eligible for tournament or post-season play.
 - a. **Number of Teams Selected.** The number of teams that qualify for post-season play at the 9-10 and up age classifications will be determined on a sliding scale, based on the number of teams in each league, as follows;

Regular Season	County-Wide Tournament
# Teams Participating	# of Teams that Qualify
9+ Teams	Top 6 Teams
7-8 Teams	Top 5 Teams
4-6 Teams	Top 4 Teams

- b. Team Selection.** The top team of each league based on the final regular season standings will advance to the county-wide tournament. Seedings will be determined based on final regular season standings. In the event of a tie, tournament seedings will be determined by the following tie-breakers;
- i. Head to Head Record
 - ii. Fewest number of forfeits
 - iii. Fewest defensive goals allowed head to head
 - iv. Fewest defensive goals allowed for the regular season
 - v. Coin toss
- c. Tournament Modifications.** Games tied at the end of regulation will have one full five-minute overtime period. If the score is still tied at the end of the overtime period, the game will be settled by a penalty kick shootout. Each team will receive a total of five (5) shots from the 10-yard line. The higher seed will select which team shall kick first. If the scored is tied at the end of the 5-round shootout, sudden-death rounds will continue until a winner has been determined. Each non-goalskeeper MUST kick in the shootout, before any player can kick a second time in that particular shootout.
- d. SWAC Tournament.** Teams 9-10 and older that are interested in the opportunity to participate in the State-Wide Athletic Committee (SWAC) Recreational or Open tournament MUST register and ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY with regards to rules, policy, procedure, registration, planning, and funding. Please visit www.ncrpa.net for SWAC tournament information.

V. AGE SPECIFIC SPECIFICATIONS

Soccer Rules	5-6 Year Old	7-8 Year Old	9-10 Year Old
Division	Instructional	Instructional	Recreational
Field Dimensions	25-35 yds. x 15-25 yds.	25-35 yds. x 15-25 yds.	55-65 yds. x 35-45 yds.
Goal Area Dimensions	N/A	4 x 5 yds.	4 x 8 yds.
Goal Frame Size	4 x 6'	6 x 12'	6 x 12'
Ball Size	Size #3	Size #3	Size #4
Team on Field	3 Players	4 Players	6 Players +1 GK*
Roster Minimum	4	6	8
Roster Maximum	8	8	12
Length of Game	4 x 8 Minute Quarters	4 x 10 Min Quarters	2 x 25 min halves
Game Clock	Running	Running	Running
Quarter Breaks	2 Minutes	2 Minutes	N/A
Halftime Breaks	5 Minutes	5 Minutes	10 Minutes
Substitutions	Unlimited, Anytime	Free during stoppage	Free during stoppage
Fouls	All result in indirect	All result in indirect	Conform to FIFA
Goalkeeping	None	None	Yes
Slide Tackles	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Heading	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
Offside	None	None	Build Out Line
Penalty Kicks	None	None	10 Yards
Throw In	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Pass In	Acceptable	Acceptable	N/A
Space from Opponent	4 yards	5 yards	Conform to FIFA
For Free Kick	Minimum	Minimum	

* A minimum total of five (5) players MUST be present to start a recreation division game

NEW in 2018. BUILD OUT LINE. New to USA Player Development Initiatives in 2017, the BUILD OUT LINE promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting. When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands during play, the opposing team MUST move behind the BUILD OUT LINE until the ball is put into play. Once the opposing team is behind the BUILD OUT LINE, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are NOT allowed). The goalkeeper can put the ball into play before the opposing team is behind the BUILD OUT LINE, accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how the play resumes.

After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the BUILD OUT LINE, and play resumes as normal. The opposing team MUST also move behind the BUILD OUT LINE during a goal kick, until the ball is put into play. If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the foul. If the punt or drop kick occurs within the

goal area, the indirect kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement took place.

The BUILD OUT LINE will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the BUILD OUT LINE. Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the BUILD OUT LINE and goal line.

To support the intent of the development rule, coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by opponents not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the BUILD OUT LINE prior to the ball being put into play. Coaches are responsible for addressing these types of issues with players. Referees can manage the situation with misconduct penalties if deemed necessary. However, referees should be flexible when enforcing the 6-second rule and counting the time of possession should only begin when all opponents have moved behind the BUILD OUT LINE.

VI. PROTESTS.

- a. **Protests WILL NOT be honored.**
- b. **Conflict Resolution & Chain of Command.** Should a conflict arise AND no decision is rendered by the onsite athletic staff, then the Focus Team Group will immediately schedule a meeting or conference call to make a final ruling. Order of decision making;
 - i. **Game Officials.** Govern play on the field.
 - ii. **MCPRD Staff.** Provide onsite administrative checkpoints for rule modifications, paperwork, and scorekeeping.
 - iii. **Youth Sports Development Staff.** Oversees league administration.

VII. CODE OF CONDUCT

***MCPRD POSSESSES A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY FOR COACHES, PARTICIPANTS, PARENTS AND SPECTATORS IN REGARDS TO INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ASSESS SUSPENSIONS AND/OR PROHIBIT ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION AT THEIR DISCRETION. PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND THE PARENT'S ASSOCIATION FOR YOUTH SPORTS (PAYS) TRAINING COURSE OFFERED AT THEIR RESPECTIVE RECREATION CENTER PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE SEASON. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SAFETY, APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND OVERALL PROGRAM INTEGRITY. EACH COACH, PARTICIPANT, PARENT AND SPECTATOR WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE FOLLOWING CONDUCT STANDARDS:**

A. **INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION WITH OFFICIALS:**

***Questioning/Arguing judgment calls made by officials is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

- 1. ONLY HEAD COACHES will be permitted to consult with the OFFICIAL regarding rule clarification ONLY and this MUST ONLY BE DONE IN A SPORTSMANLIKE MANNER. It is **in the best interest of**

head coaches to approach officials in a courteous manner and in the presence of staff whenever possible.

2. Arguing/disputing judgment calls is strictly prohibited and will be viewed as verbal abuse. Coaches, participants and/or spectators are not permitted to badger, criticize, harass or mock officials.

B. INTIMIDATION, COMMUNICATING THREATS, VERBAL ABUSE & BULLYING:

1. Coaches, participants, parents and spectators may not attempt to intimidate, threaten, verbally abuse or engage in a verbal confrontation of any sort with any other coaches, participants, parents, spectators, Park and Recreation staff or officials.
2. Coaches, participants, parents and spectators may not make physical contact of any kind with any other coaches, participants, parents, spectators, Park and Recreation staff or officials.

C. POOR SPORTSMANSHIP & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:

1. Any and all team-affiliated persons (coaches, participants, parents and spectators) must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner when involved in any Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department's youth athletic programs. This rule applies to conduct on all MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK PROPERTY before, during, and after scheduled events.

NOTE: If spectators and/or affiliated persons' conduct become overly unruly & unsportsmanlike during the course of the game, the M CPRD staff & game officials reserve the authority to empty the facility & allow only coaches & players to remain, in the effort to finish game play.

D. ALCOHOL/ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES:

1. The possession of, use of and/or participation while under the influence of alcohol or any other illegal substance is strictly prohibited.

A. EJECTIONS:

Any coaches, participants or spectators who are ejected from a youth sports program, activity or event will be automatically ineligible to coach, participate and/or spectate until such time that they are notified by the Youth Sports Staff (See F. Incident Procedures below).

B. INCIDENT PROCEDURES:

Individuals reported to be ejected or in violation of the Conduct of Conduct will be notified of an immediate temporary suspension from the program and asked to provide a written statement regarding the details of the incident in question, as well as their involvement or participation in said incident no later than 5:00pm of the following Tuesday to a Youth Sports staff member at YouthSports@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov. Failure to provide a written statement is viewed as an admission of guilt.

VIII. SUSPENSIONS

For more information on suspensions, please refer to the Sports Suspension Policy for Youth Sports.

For more information about MCPRD Youth Sports programs, please contact your nearest Recreation Center, or Youth Sports Department at (980) 314-1116 or via email at youthsports@mcknc.gov.

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department encourages and promotes inclusive leisure experiences in all programs, activities and sports leagues. Inclusive leisure experiences encourage and enhance opportunities for individuals of varying abilities to participate and interact in life activities together with dignity. It also provides an environment that promotes and fosters physical, social, and psychological inclusion of people with diverse experiences and skill levels. Inclusion enhances individual potential for full and active participation in leisure activities and experiences.

